

ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA,  
CANNING, 24 PARGANAS,  
WEST BENGAL,  
August 21, 1985.

N. C. NANDI

REFERENCE

- SILAS, E. G., RAJAGOPALAN, M., DAN, S. S. & FERNANDO, A. B. (1984): Observations on the mass nesting and immediate postmass nesting influxes of the olive ridley *Lepidochelys olivacea* at Gahirmatha, Orissa-1984 season. *Bull. Cent. Mar. Fish. Res. Inst.*, 35: 76-82.

22. A NOTE ON CANNIBALISM IN FRESHWATER SOFTSHELLED  
TURTLE *TRIONYX GANGETICUS* (CUVIER)

The feeding behaviour of *Trionyx gangeticus* is little known. Fishermen near Narmada and Chambal rivers report that the species scavenge on human corpses. Turtles inhabiting local lakes in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh feed on fish and molluscs and also take aquatic vegetation mainly the water-chestnut (*Trapa bispinosa*). I report here on the cannibalistic behaviour of a turtle under captivity.

In June 1981, a turtle caught by local fishermen in the Upper lake of Bhopal was brought to our Department laboratory and kept in a tank measuring 1.5 x 0.4 x 0.3 m. The turtle was fed with some aquatic plants

for one week after which no food was given. In September 1981, seventeen spoiled eggs of another *Trionyx* were put in the tank. These eggs were consumed by the turtle over a period of 4 days. In September 1982, a second turtle was introduced into the tank. After six months I found that the second turtle had eaten the first (Probably after the latter's death). Only the hardshell and bones were left in the tank. From the above it is evident that *Trionyx gangeticus* can live without food for more than a year and it also consumes meat and eggs of its own species.

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23. A NOTE ON REPRODUCTION IN THE HIMALAYAN PIT VIPER  
(*AGKISTRODON HIMALAYANUS*)

Although reportedly exceedingly common in some parts of its range (Smith 1943) the Himalayan pit viper (*Agkistrodon himalayanus*) remains poorly represented in the litera-

ture. On the reproductive habits of this species, Wall (1910) states: "I do not know the exact mating season, but it is probably in spring—April or May..... and the young

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are launched forth probably in August and September. What the length of the embryo at birth is I cannot state but it is probably about 5 inches. The species is not very prolific, only 5 to 7 embryos having been observed in a single brood". Telford (1980) provides more definite information citing the example of three females in his collection, from the Northwest Frontier Province in Pakistan, giving birth to 6, 5 and 5 young on 27 August, 6 September and 8 September, 1975 respectively. The average length of the young (N=14) is given as: snout to vent (SV)  $146.9 \pm 2.2$  mm and tail  $24.3 \pm 0.9$  mm.

On 16 September, 1984 I collected one adult male and one obviously gravid female from a locality known as Pohur Pajan, about 11 km. east of the village of Batkote on the Anantnag — Pahalgam road in the State of Jammu and

Kashmir, at an altitude of approximately 2,200 m. One month later, on 17 October 1985 the female — measuring 500 mm total length and weighing 48 g. — gave birth to 2 live and 1 dead young. They measured as follows:

	Sex	Length (in mm.)		Weight (in g.)	Remarks
		snout to vent	tail		
1.	F	150	22	3	—
2.	F	162	20	3	—
3.	M	155	30	3	stillborn

Sexing was done by hemipenes eversion. The young were exact copies of the adults only, more brightly marked. In disposition they were very frisky and struck readily when provoked (unlike the adults), flattening their bodies and rapidly vibrating their tail tips. Efforts to keep them alive failed as they refused to feed.

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June 29, 1985.

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 TELFORD, S. R. (1980): Notes on *Agkistrodon himalayanus* from Pakistan's Kaghan Valley. *Copeia* WALL, F. (1910): A popular treatise on the common Indian snakes, part XIII, *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. XX, No. 1.

24. UNIQUE BEHAVIOUR OF BULL FROGS

I was reading Vol. 41(3) of the Society's *Journal* for April 1940 and came across Miscellaneous Note No. XVII at page 668 by Mr. H. N. Charrington titled "Snake attacked by frogs".

The above article made interesting reading in view of my own experience early one morning in 1974 at Konta of Bastar District. While on tour I was out for a morning walk

at about 6 a.m. The difference between Mr. Charrington's experience and mine were that the snake was a 'Dhaman' and was no less than 3' long and it actually held a bull frog greenish yellow in colour from behind and about 4 to 5 frogs of the same species were around the frog. The location was a shrub of *Ipomoea* and the water spread about 5' with a depth of 1 to 1½".